

Action Steps for Being a Trans* Ally

Words matter

Why? By using problematic language you hurt real people and allow others to think it's ok. That's what keeps the cycle of violence going.

Terms like tranny, she-male, he-she, it, trap, hermaphrodite, T-girl, and boi are generally derogatory or imply that someone isn't "real." That includes prefixes like real, bio, genetic, natural, or born-woman/man. **Don't use them.**

Do say: *cisgender* when you mean someone who isn't transgender.

Transgender is an adjective, not a noun or verb.
Say *a transgender person* or *trans man/woman*, **not** "a transgender," "she is transgendered," or "a transman /trans-man."

Be an Active Bystander

When you hear others saying things in hurtful ways, making a joke, snickering, or fetishizing trans* people, start a conversation. Share what you know and how it affects you and people who matter to you. Let others know you don't want to live in a world that makes it ok to demean groups of people. Share options about other language to use.

Names

The name a trans* person gives you **IS** their **real** name. Questioning it takes away a person's agency and buys into the myth that trans* people are deceptive. Some people don't want to be called Jimmy if their name is James. Give everyone that same courtesy.

Pronouns

They replace a person's name when talking in the third-person. You have pronouns too, we all do!

Examples:

- Ze/zir/zim
- He/him/his
- She/her/hers
- They/them/theirs
- Cie/hir/hirs

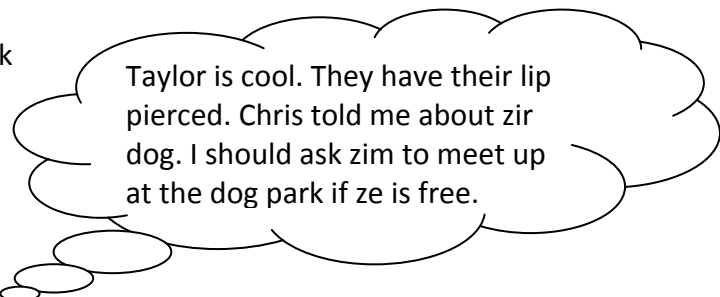
(pronounced see/here/heres)

You might prefer cake to pie, but a person's pronouns are not up for debate. Even if they are new to you. Even if you were taught different grammar rules. While pronouns imply something about gender, they don't declare someone's gender identity.

Someone's pronouns might be different than what you assume, so it's best to ask, "**What pronouns should I use for you?**" Then use that pronoun and encourage others to do the same if you have permission.

What if I make a mistake? Apologize briefly, correct yourself, and move on. Then remember it for next time.

You might need to slow down while you talk so that you think first. You might also try practicing talking about a person in your head or out loud when you're alone.



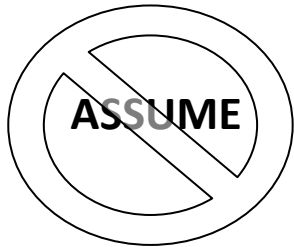
Taylor is cool. They have their lip pierced. Chris told me about zir dog. I should ask zim to meet up at the dog park if ze is free.

Introduce yourself with your name **and your own pronouns**. This makes it safe for others to do the same.

Trans* people have lost homes and jobs, friends and family, and have been assaulted and murdered when others revealed their trans* status. Remind others who ask or gossip about a person they know or think is trans*.

“Outing”

Get permission before sharing information about a trans* person. Just because they trusted you does NOT mean they want to disclose their identity, name, pronouns, medical choices, etc. to anyone else.



Sexual Orientation

Being gay doesn't mean you're trans* and being trans* doesn't mean you're gay. Sexual orientation is about who we're attracted to. Gender identity is how we see ourselves. Trans* people can identify as gay, lesbian, straight, bisexual, pansexual, asexual, queer, etc. just like cisgender people.

“Have you had ‘The Surgery?’” =

“What do your genitals look like?”

Check with yourself first...
Would I ask anyone else this question?

You're also asking about private medical information. Would you ask someone you don't know well about a medical condition? Remember, some people can't afford or choose not to get surgery or hormones. That doesn't make them any less trans*.

Speaking of how expensive it is...

Be a loud **advocate** for full access to respectful health care including basic primary care, hormones, and facial, chest, and genital surgeries.

Some health insurance plans exclude trans* people from getting **any** coverage, not just transition-specific surgery.



Bathrooms

Gender variant people may not match the little signs on the restroom door



Trans* people experience violence and harassment in public bathrooms

Help make bathrooms safer. Encourage businesses and agencies to have gender-neutral bathrooms. Some people may want to be accompanied to the bathroom so they feel less vulnerable to verbal or physical attack.

**Speak UP
not FOR**

Listen to trans* voices. You might have good ideas and great intentions. Always first ask what trans* people want and need from you. They are the experts on their own lives!

**Do the work
before you add
the “T” in LGBT.**

- Read, follow blogs, and educate yourself before asking trans* people to teach you
- Include trans* people at all levels of your work, not as tokens
- Encourage, make way for, and develop trans* leaders

Glossary of Trans* Terms: <http://www.erinhoudini.com/transgender-glossary.html>
Cisgender Privilege Checklist: <http://takesupspace.wordpress.com/cis-privilege-checklist/>

Injustice at Every Turn - A Report of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey: http://www.thetaskforce.org/reports_and_research/ntds

Intersex Roadshow: <http://intersexroadshow.blogspot.com/> (Intersex people sometimes intersect with the trans* community as well as face other stigma)

Good reads:

“My Gender Workbook”, Kate Bornstein
“Transgender Warriors”, Leslie Feinberg
“Whipping Girl”, Julia Serano
“Transgender History”, Susan Stryker